

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 5-41 are pending. Claim 5, 15, 24-25, 32, and 35 have been amended. Support for the amended claims can be found in the specification. No new matter has been added.

Claims 5-41 were rejected under a judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-27 of U.S. patent 6,645,828 ('828 patent) and claims 1-8 of U.S. patent 6,180,496 ('496 patent).

Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are distinct from the claims of the '828 patent and the '496 patent. For example, claim 5 recites, in part, "releasing the first substrate to initiate a bond between the first face and the second face." This claimed feature is not recited in any claims of the '828 patent and the '496 patent

Furthermore, claim 5 recites, in part, "transferring a first substrate and a second substrate from a cassette to a plasma chamber equipped with a bonding apparatus." Applicants believe this claimed features is not a necessary way of "placing" substrates in a chamber.

Accordingly, claim 5 should be allowed for at least these reasons. Claims 6-14, which depend from claim 5 should be allowed for at least a similar rationale as discussed for claim 5, as well as the additional features they recite.

The above discussion can also be applied to independent claims 15, 25, and 35, of the present application, which recite at least one similar feature. Therefore, claims 15, 25, and 35 should be allowed for at least the same rationale as discussed for claim 5. Claims 16-24, 26-34, and 36-41, which depend from claims 15, 25, and 35, should also be allowed for at least a similar rationale, as well as for the additional features they recite.

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PATENT

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,


Tyrome Y. Brown
Reg. No. 46,580

TOWNSEND and TOWNSEND and CREW LLP
Two Embarcadero Center, Eighth Floor
San Francisco, California 94111-3834
Tel: 650-326-2400
Fax: 415-576-0300
Attachments
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